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418 (10)  
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November 10 - November 16, 2020

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 10, Issue 482

## WP Hospital's First Outpatient Surgery Center Opens

By Rick Pezzullo

White Plains Hospital's first outpatient surgery center opened in early-October at 226 Westchester Avenue in Harrison and is expected to see more than 2,100 cases in its first 12 months of operation.

"The addition of our new Ambulatory Surgery Center at Harrison underscores our commitment to enhancing the patient experience by providing access to convenient, high-quality care for our community," said Dr. Kaare Weber, director of surgery at White Plains Hospital. "This new facility, along with our soon to be completed Center for Advanced Medicine & Surgery, demonstrates our long-term vision to transform and expand in order to provide sophisticated, state-of-the-art care as we build on our status as the top healthcare provider in

Westchester County."

The Ambulatory Surgery Center at Harrison, totaling 10,000 square feet, features four state-of-the-art operating rooms and spacious prep and recovery areas, including a 12-bed postsurgical care unit. A dedicated team of highly skilled, board certified surgeons and anesthesiologists offer a wide range of minimally invasive procedures for orthopedics, sports medicine, otolaryngology (ENT) and plastic and cosmetic surgery.

"To be able to open an outpatient surgery center in the wake of a pandemic, shows that our patients realize that their health is essential," Dr. Weber said. "People are no longer delaying getting the critical care they need, and it is our goal to make sure they get timely, quality treatment and are on their way to recovery as soon as possible



Dr. Michael Schwartz, orthopedic surgeon; Dr. Andrew Casden, Chief of Orthopedic Surgery and Spine Surgery; Dr. Jason Choi, anesthesiologist; Dr. Kaare Weber, Director of Surgery; Susan Fox, President & CEO; Leigh Anne McMahon, Chief Nursing Officer; Dr. Michael Palumbo, Chief Medical Officer; Jose Lam, Vice President, Clinical Operations and Joe Guarracino, CFO.

## Luxury Independent Living Facility to Open in White Plains in 2022

By Anna Young

Senior citizens will soon have another housing option in Westchester as developers erect a new luxury independent living facility in downtown White Plains.

Epoch Senior Living is currently building Waterstone of Westchester, a premier independent living community for those ages 62 and older, located on Bloomingdale Road near the Westchester Mall and I-287. The 132-unit community will feature a luxury boutique hotel-style community enriched with amenities, including a movie theater, fitness center, indoor pool, lobby bar, art studio and salon.

Additionally, the facility, which is under construction and will open in 2022, will feature gourmet cuisine served in a variety of on-site dining venues and prepared by professional chefs who use locally sourced and seasonal ingredients. Residents will also have access to home care services through an on-site partnership with VNS Westchester.

Joanna Cormac Burt, COO of Epoch Senior Living, said she's

excited to open a new facility in Westchester to ensure seniors have the opportunity to remain in their home communities while residing in a premier independent living facility.

"This extraordinary community goes way beyond expectations by offering a luxurious setting with supportive services and a multitude of social opportunities," Burt said. "We are particularly excited about our location in downtown White Plains, a vibrant city with restaurants, shops and cultural activities all within walking distance, perfect for our new community."

Waterstone of Westchester is the latest independent senior living community created by Epoch and National Development. Epoch currently operates 15 senior living communities in the Northeast, including three in Fairfield County in Connecticut.

Waterstone of Westchester would be the first in New York State.

The facility will feature a choice of spacious one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and two-

*continued on page 2*



## Democracy in Action

Westchester County Executive George Latimer and White Plains Mayor Tom Roach were among the approximately 200 people that took part in a demonstration last week in White Plains to advocate every vote cast in this year's elections are counted. The peaceful demonstration was organized by Protect the Results, a coalition of more than 100 groups formed to ensure the counting of all legitimately cast ballots - whether they were cast in person, by mail, or in election drop boxes.





## Independent Living Facility to Open in White Plains

*continued from page 1*

bedroom plus den apartments, complete with high-end finishes and upgrades. The apartments will start at \$6,900 per month.

"Waterstone of Westchester promises to be a first-class addition to White Plains," Mayor Tom Roach said. "One of the keys to a vibrant community is its ability to attract people of all ages and at different stages of

their lives."

The Welcome Center is now open and located at 15 Maple Avenue in White Plains. Open houses are scheduled for November and families interested in attending should call in advance for timed visits to meet COVID-19 social distancing requirements. For more information about Waterstone of Westchester, visit [www.waterstoneofwestchester.com](http://www.waterstoneofwestchester.com).

## Luxury Senior Living Residence in Greenburgh Taking Reservations

By Rick Pezzullo

Reservations are being taken for a new luxury senior living residence on the former site of Frank's Nursery in Greenburgh.

The newly completed, three-story Chelsea at Greenburgh on 715 Dobbs Ferry Road will feature 101 residential units and offer assisted living and memory care.

"This building has surpassed our expectations," said Roger Bernier, President and Chief Operating Officer of Chelsea Senior Living. "Our team has spent the last two years forging partnerships with the Westchester senior community, first responders and care givers. We are happy to take our place here and look forward to providing an outstanding experience for our residents."

Final licensing from the New York State Department of Health is anticipated any day, which will clear the way for residents to move in.

"With robust safety protocols in place, we are able to provide a safe experience for visitors," said Diane Mandracchia, Executive Director of the Chelsea. "We are providing in-person tours with social distanc-

ing and other precautions. The health and safety of our residents and staff is always a top priority."

In addition to modern amenities like a bistro, club room, art studio, salon, sports lounge, theater, fitness/rehab room and a separate dining room and program room for Memory Care residents, The Chelsea at Greenburgh will offer individualized services for residents with more complex needs. These services include, but are not limited to, assistance with injectable medications including diabetes management, assistance with walking and stairs as well as palliative care. All care is supervised by a registered nurse who is on call 24/7.

"Making these enhanced care services available allows our residents to age in place in a homelike setting without frequent trips to hospitals and doctors," Mandracchia said. "There's a need for these services in assisted living and we are happy to provide them. Our goal is to put a smile on the face of each and every resident every day, while providing peace of mind for all of our families."

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# COVID-19 Cases Continue to Surge Playing Havoc With School Schedules

By Martin Wilbur

Officials remained wary this week as COVID-19 positivity rates and cases continue to surge in the area and throughout the state, an increase that has forced various schools throughout the region at least temporarily move to remote learning.

On Sunday, positivity rates in Westchester and Putnam counties soared to more than 4 percent, a trend that started slowly toward the end of September but has continued to accelerate.

Westchester saw its positivity rate clock in at 4.2 percent on Sunday, with 275 positive results from 6,601 tests. That was up from 3.4 percent on Saturday, 2.9 percent last Friday and 2.3 percent each last Wednesday and Thursday. The number of active cases within the county stood at 2,048 as of Saturday.

County Executive George Latimer acknowledged Monday that "the trend lines are concerning." However, he cautioned that the seriousness is nowhere near the problems the county and the state faced in early spring.

"I don't think we've reached the point at which we can call it a wave of similar intensity to what we saw in the spring, and if it becomes that then it will indeed be a ferocious impact on us," Latimer said.

He attributed at least some of the increase to social gatherings as well as the return of students to college and in-person learning in local school districts.

Over the weekend there were 82 COVID-19 hospitalizations in Westchester, up from 48 on Nov. 1. One person died from the virus from each of the last three days last week ending on Saturday.

In Putnam, the arc of the recent bump in cases and positivity rates was similar. On Sunday, there were 30 positives reported from 665 tests, which computes to a 4.5 percent rate. The positivity rate ranged from 2 to 4.5 percent during the past week. There are 71 active cases in Putnam County with two hospitalizations.

The county saw its first COVID-19-related death since the summer during the past week. **Schools Feel the Surge**

The spike in cases is playing havoc with school schedules and districts' ability to test and have enough staff on hand in some cases. Bedford Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joel Adelberg announced that for the remainder of this week, all Fox Lane Middle School will transition to remote learning.

There were 20 Bedford students

districtwide that were positive as of last Friday, according to the state's COVID-19 report card that monitors cases within schools. But quarantining staff members has challenges created a different set of challenges, Adelberg wrote to parents on Monday.

"Based on the number of teachers and staff that have to be quarantined, students will continue to learn remotely for the rest of the week. They will be expected to attend every class via Google Meets at home," he stated.

Somers Middle School closed on Tuesday in favor of remote learning after an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 was last in the building last Thursday. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Raymond Blanch said in a communication with parents that plans call

for middle school students return to class on Thursday.

As of last Friday, there were 12 positive cases among students in Byram Hills, including nine at the high school. However, there were 43 sixth-graders at H.C. Crittenden Middle School and six staff members who must quarantine until at least Nov. 18, said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jen Lamia.

In Pleasantville, the high school was closed last Friday after one reported case, and two new cases were reported on Monday for a total of five active cases, said Superintendent of Schools Mary-Fox Alter. Bedford Road School has one presumed case.

Fox-Alter said that none of the cases were contracted at school and in each instance the

cases were unrelated to each other. While uncertain whether Halloween celebrations from the previous weekend played a role in any of the positive cases, she had no knowledge of outrageous flouting of guidelines.

"I have no information that says that people in Pleasantville did not violate New York State guidance for outdoor activities," Fox-Alter said. "I have no information that anybody violated them."

The number of active cases in individual municipalities have been on the increase throughout the county. As of Monday, there were 106 active cases in White Plains, 70 in Peekskill, 46 in Yorktown, 43 in Cortlandt, 37 in Mount Pleasant, 34 in North Castle, 32 in Mount Kisco and 28 in New Castle.



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# Incumbents Dominate in Area's State Legislature Races

By Martin Wilbur

Incumbents ruled the day in most of the area's state Senate and Assembly races, with resounding victories in most contests.

State Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) breezed to a second full term in the 37th state Senate District while the same was true for Sen. Sue Serino (R-Hyde Park) in the 41st Senate District, which includes portions of Putnam and Dutchess counties.

Meanwhile, Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) was elected to her 15th term in the Assembly easily defeating Lawrence Chiulli by just over 10,000 votes in the 95th Assembly District.

Bedford Supervisor Chris Burdick, who was running for state office for the first time, easily beat back a challenge from Republican John Nuculovic, 30,465-19,270.

In each race, there are thousands of absentee ballots.

Mayer, chair of the Senate Committee on Education, won re-election with a lead of more than 17,000 votes (62,345-44,966).

"I am honored to be re-elected to serve as your State Senator for the 37th Senate District," Mayer said in a statement. "This has been a tough and divisive election season, and things are still unsettled in many



State Sen. Shelley Mayer, left, and Assemblywoman Sandy Galef were two of the big winners in last week's election.

races locally and nationally as we await the work of election officials in counting every duly casted ballot. Once all the ballots are counted, those of us sworn into office serve all constituents, irrespective of political affiliation."

Serino easily led Democratic challenger Karen Smythe by a little more than 18,000 votes (70,263-52,053). Smythe conceded the race last week.

Galef won easily in the Westchester portion of the district by just over 10,000 votes and eked out a small advantage in Putnam County by about 100 votes, to win her 15th term.



This was Chiulli's second attempt at unseating Galef. He previously ran against the 80-year-old Ossining resident in 2018.

It was also the second consecutive defeat for Nuculovic in the 93rd Assembly District. In 2018, he lost to David Buchwald who decided to run for the Democratic nomination in the 17th Congressional District.

Assemblyman Kevin Byrne (R-Mahopac) comfortably won another term, holding off Democratic challenger Stephanie Keegan in the 94th Assembly District, which takes in portions of northern Westchester and Putnam counties.

In addition to the 40th Senate District race between Rob Astorino and Peter Hareckham that hasn't been called, there is another area state Senate election that similarly is hanging in the balance. In the 38th Senate District, which includes much of Rockland County and Ossining in Westchester County, Republican Bill Weber led Democrat Elijah Reichlin-Melnick by 3,155 votes with absentee ballots still to be counted. Reichlin-Melnick won the Westchester part of the district by 3,993 votes in early and Election Day voting, but Weber held a more than 7,100-vote advantage in Rockland.

Democrats, who held 40 of the state Senate's 63 seats before the election, will retain control of the legislative body. However, Republicans are hopeful that they can pick up as many as six seats when the counting is completed.

Senate Majority Leader Andrew Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers) and Assembly members Thomas Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) and Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale) were all unopposed in their re-election bids.

Mimi Rocah was elected Westchester's next district attorney, defeating Republican Bruce Bendish 198,115-113,413. Bendish had announced in September that he was withdrawing from the race,

but it was too late to have his name removed from the ballot.

## Morton Wins New Castle Special Election

Lori Morton won election to fill the final year of Supervisor Ivy Pool's unexpired term last week.

Although she was the only name on the ballot in the race, Chappaqua resident Thomas O'Connor ran a late write-in campaign in protest of the current Town Board's apparent support of the increasingly controversial Form Based Code, which could potentially increase development in downtown Chappaqua.

Morton collected 5,300 votes after Election Day and early voting results were tabulated. She said that she was told there had been 530 write-in votes with two town election districts.

Morton, who said she is looking forward to serving, said given O'Connor's late entry into the race had an uphill climb, but his candidacy does deliver a message.

"It captures a moment of what's going on in New Castle and I think was a reasonably effective vehicle to express some people's dismay," she said.

Anna Young contributed to this article.

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# Jones Wins Historic Congressional Race; Maloney Holds Narrow Lead

By Martin Wilbur

Democrat Mondaire Jones completed his historic political ascent last week, capturing the 17th Congressional District race claiming victory last Wednesday afternoon.

Meanwhile, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney who is seeking his fifth term in office, in the 18th Congressional District, held a lead of just under 7,000 votes with thousands of absentee ballots still to be counted.

Jones, 33, who will become the first openly gay Black member of Congress, thanked the voters of the district shortly after the Associated Press had called the race in his favor. He will replace Rep. Nita Lowey who is retiring at the end of the year after serving 16 terms in the House of Representatives.

"I am humbled by the trust voters in Westchester and Rockland have placed in me and grateful for the opportunity to serve the community that raised me," Jones said.

He defeated Republican Maureen McArdle Schulman 134,835-98,634 with an undetermined number of absentee ballots still to be counted. However, a large percentage of those ballots are presumed to be from registered Democrats who voted by absentee ballot by a much wider percentage than Republicans.

Jones said he was excited to be part of an emerging progressive movement in New York State, joining congressional representatives-elect Ritchie Torres and Jamaal Bowman from the 15th and 16th congressional districts, respectively, in Washington.

But he dismissed criticisms that issues



Mondaire Jones won his race for the House of Representatives last week. He will replace veteran Rep. Nita Lowey, who is retiring at the end of the year after 32 years in Congress.

such as addressing climate change, providing quality health care for all regardless of employment status, racial justice and guaranteeing a livable wage for all those who are gainfully employed as radical.

"The era of small ideas is over," Jones said. "The big ideas around which we centered our movement are not radical. They are necessary to renew our democracy, save the planet and create economic opportunity for all."

His top priorities once he arrives in Washington in January will be to provide

COVID-19 relief, lift the limit on the state and local tax deduction that was capped at \$10,000 in the 2017 tax legislation and working toward democracy reforms in the H.R. 1 bill, known as the For the People Act, which would end gerrymandering, expand voting rights and overhaul the nation's campaign finance system.

Schulman, reached a few hours after Jones proclaimed victory, had not yet conceded, and won't do so until the absentee ballots are counted, most likely later this week. She said there are 30,000 absentee ballots in Rockland County and a likely larger number than that in the Westchester portion of the district.

She lamented what she characterized as an inordinate amount of free press that Jones had received and the lack of help from the Republican committees in Westchester and Rockland. The political committees called her candidacy "a losing cause," said Schulman, a Yorktown resident.

"It would have been nice if I got a little help from both county GOP organizations," Schulman said. "That would have been wonderful. Basically, I was hung out to dry and everything was on my own."

She did not rule out staying involved in local politics and making another run for office in the future.

Jones said he will work every day on behalf of all his constituents in the district. He hoped his victory would be a sign that someone like himself who grew up poor, Black and gay can be part of the political process and serve as a beacon of hope for anyone who is considered different.

"It's for the hundreds of young queer kids across New York's 17th and throughout this country, many of whom have written to tell me my presence in the public arena gives them confidence to embrace who they are and to live authentic lives," Jones said.

## Maloney Leads Farley in Tight Race

In a race that was thought to be safely in the Democrats' column, Maloney led Republican challenger Chele Farley 135,819-127,923.

Farley, who two years ago was trounced by U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillebrand, had an impressive showing.

"In a historic night for Republicans, the race in New York's 18th Congressional District is one of the closest in the nation and the outcome could determine control of the U.S. House of Representatives," Farley said in a statement.

"I am so humbled and grateful for the immense support I've received from voters in this district," she continued. "It is the enthusiasm I've encountered on the ground that erases any doubt in my mind about moving forward with counting every ballot. Every voice in New York's 18th deserves to be heard."

Republicans will pick up a still undetermined number of seats in the House of Representatives, although the final margin is unknown. There are 24 races around the country that have yet to be called as of Monday morning, including the 18th Congressional District.

The 18th Congressional District includes portions of northern Westchester and Dutchess counties, and all of Putnam and Orange counties.

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# Coalition Organizes Rallies to Make Sure Every Vote is Counted

By Anna Young

As President Donald Trump made unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud and called for the ballot counting process to come to a halt last week, protesters across the Hudson Valley and nation took to the streets to demand a free and fair election process.

As part of the Protect the Results movement, nearly 100 voters on Wednesday gathered at the gazebo in Peekskill to contend the process of counting every vote be completed. Attendees urged the need to protect the outcome the basis of the nation's democracy.

"It's really surreal to hear the president

disenfranchise voters, and not only the people who voted for him, but people who voted against him," organizer Courtney Williams said. "We want to make sure that every vote gets counted."

Protect the Results, a nationwide coalition of more than 150 national activities organizations, including Indivisible, MoveOn and Daily Kos, had put out calls for action prior to Election Day, amid Trump broadcasting accusations alluding to voter fraud as results trickled in putting now-President-elect Joe Biden ahead in the race.

Hours before the Nov. 4 protest, Trump had filed lawsuits in Pennsylvania, Georgia and Michigan to halt the battleground states from counting remaining votes as he led in the polls. At the same time, the president and his Republican allies insisted that Arizona and Nevada continue counting the votes to ensure he picked up crucial electoral college support.

Biden was inevitably declared the winner in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Nevada and continues to lead in Georgia and Arizona, according to The Associated Press.

Judges have since either tossed out or ruled against Trump's suits in Pennsylvania, Nevada, Georgia, and Michigan. However, Trump is continuing to demand a recount in Wisconsin, where Biden won by a slim margin, and Georgia.

"Clearly, he's picking and choosing which states and which votes are counted and that's not how this works," Williams said. "You'd think the sitting president would want to ensure the integrity of the election instead of undermining that."



ANNA YOUNG PHOTO

Peekskill resident Carlos Rodriguez was one of nearly 100 protesters who attended the Nov. 4 Protect the Results demonstration in Peekskill.

With Peekskill police on standby and those with de-escalation training in attendance, demonstrators ignored passersby shouting obscenities while chanting, singing and pressing for over an hour the need to stand together to ensure the integrity of the nation's elections are upheld. Further, they asserted that the losing candidate must concede for the good of the country and follow the tradition of providing a peaceful transition of power.

Since Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were declared the winners of the 2020 election on Saturday, Trump as of Sunday had yet to concede as others before him have done immediately after the election

was called. He instead continues to tweet, without evidence, that mail-in ballots are a hoax, claiming the election was "stolen" from him, while also insisting he won.

"Throughout our history, generations of Americans have come together to make a future where our voices are heard and rights are respected, no matter our color, our income or our zip code," Peekskill Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo said. "We must stand on guard to protect our democracies health and ensure that every voice and every vote are counted."

A Protect the Results rally was also held last Wednesday in White Plains.

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# Chappaqua, Democrats Hold Celebration After Biden Victory

By Lindsay Emery

Children wearing American flags draped over their shoulders and people holding red, white and blue balloons gathered at the Chappaqua train station Saturday afternoon to celebrate the victory of President-elect Joe Biden.

More than 50 people, socially distanced, along with more than 100 cars honked while circling the train station's roundabout to recognize Biden's election a couple of hours after national news networks projected he would win the hotly-contested race against President Donald Trump.

Pleasantville resident Meghan Greene saw the event posted on Facebook and decided to come out to the train station and take a moment to celebrate a new administration.

"It just feels like a return to decency," she said. "A return to someone who has values and core beliefs that align with mine."

Rhea and David Mallett attended the event because they were grateful and thrilled to hear the news. The Malletts brought their truck with Biden-Harris signs decorating the driver's side and a large Biden-Harris flag billowing out of the bed of the truck.

"I think we're the only Biden truck in all of Westchester!" Rhea said.

Members of up2us organized the celebration shortly after the race was called. They played music, waved Biden-Harris flags and held signs to commemorate the win.

"This was a very impromptu decision



LINDSAY EMERY PHOTO

Part of the celebratory gathering last Saturday afternoon at the Chappaqua train station shortly after Joe Biden was called the winner in the presidential race.

to follow suit with all these kinds of rallies that are happening all over the country in Manhattan and Washington," said Iris Lachaud, chair of up2us. "I believe there was one in White Plains so we decided we needed to be with our friends to celebrate."

Founded in 2015, up2us supported Hillary Clinton's bid for the Democratic nomination and her presidential campaign in 2016. Founding members of up2us, formerly called Chappaqua Friends of Hillary, stayed

together after the 2016 presidential election to work toward President Trump becoming a one-term president.

"And that's what we've been doing for the last four years, is really working on local elections and helping to flip the house in 2018," board member Kristin Lore said.

Rye resident Lisa Tannenbaum described how she had been volunteering until 9 p.m. Friday night helping with voter protections in North Carolina and Georgia. When she

heard the news this morning, she knew she wanted to be in Chappaqua because of all the work she did for the Clinton campaign and over the past four years.

"It's Joe Biden's moment, but she [Hillary] made this moment happen," Tannenbaum said. "And she made it so it could be possible to have our first woman vice president."

County Executive George Latimer also attended and expressed his confidence in Biden and how he will be a unifying president for the entire country.

"The problems are too complicated and no one side of the debate has all the answers, but you can't divide the nation and move it forward," Latimer said. "You have to unify it and I think he can do it."

Former county legislator Michael Kaplowitz, along with Latimer, gave impromptu speeches during the event, pointing to the stark differences in tone and stature between President Trump and President-elect Biden.

"And that's what we believe in, that together we try to address the problems," Latimer said. "We don't ignore COVID, we try to address it. We don't ignore the problems that we have around the world, we try to address them."

Kaplowitz described how he met Biden at the 2004 Democratic Convention and how he will have intelligent, mature dialogue.

"There is nothing to take back because we have been great all along and Joe will take us to the next level where we belong," he said. "Let's go Joe Biden!"



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## Obituary

### Rudolph Russo

Rudolph J. Russo, 91, of Peekskill, passed away on Oct. 15.

Russo was born on July 23, 1929, in New York City to Terrasa Stafforini and Giuseppe Russo. He grew up in Montrose and graduated from Hendrick Hudson High School. He served honorably in the U.S. Air Force. Russo was a plumber and owner of Central Heating and Plumbing located in Peekskill.

Russo is survived by his wife, Joyce, of 68 years; sons Rudy and Randy of Peekskill; daughter Roxanne Russo Fisher (Dennis) and grandson Kyle Russo Fisher of Garrison; his brother, Jack Russo, of Poughkeepsie; and sister Caroline (Russo) Serrano of Maryland.

Russo is predeceased by his sisters, Margaret (Russo) O'Connor and Letitia Russo, and his brother, Albert Russo.

A celebration of his life will be held at a future date. He will be dearly missed.



Rudolph Russo

## Westchester County Jail Inmate Sentenced in the Death of Another Inmate

By Anna Young

A Yonkers man will spend the next seven years in prison after killing a fellow inmate while serving time in Westchester County Jail.

William Johnson, 21, was sentenced last Thursday after pleading guilty in October to second-degree assault, a class D felony for the death of 18-year-old Bryce Neville. The pair were serving time together in the Valhalla jail at the time of the killing, according to the Westchester County district attorney's office.

On Jan. 30, while inside the jail, Johnson punched Neville in the side of the head,

which resulted in Neville falling to the floor and suffering serious injury. Neville was taken to Westchester County Medical Center where he died on Feb. 3, officials said.

The Westchester County Medical Examiner determined the cause of death to be blunt force injury to the head, a skull fracture and subarachnoid hemorrhage.

Officials said the attack was investigated by the district attorney's office in collaboration with the Westchester County Department of Public Safety and the Westchester County Department of Correction. Assistant District Attorney Lana Hochheiser, deputy chief of the Homicide Bureau, prosecuted the case.

## Mount Kisco Firefighters Put Out Large Brushfire

Firefighters from Mount Kisco and 10 other surrounding departments extinguished a significant brushfire last Saturday afternoon in a wooded area just over the town line into North Castle.

John Hochstein, first assistant chief with Union Hook & Ladder, said the department was called at 1:36 p.m. to fight a blaze near 101 Tripp St. and 13 Sheather Rd. It is believed that the fire started because

of natural causes as a result of warm, dry conditions and dead vegetation, he said.

Hochstein estimated that the fire spread to as much as 500 yards by 250 yards.

It took less than three hours to get the fire under control and firefighters were able to clear the scene by nightfall, he said. There were no injuries or damage to structures.

—Martin Wilbur

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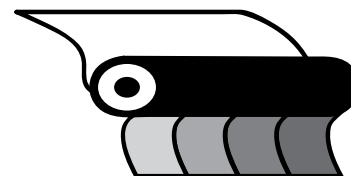
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# Pleasantville STRONG Moves Forward into Next Chapter

By Abby Luby

For the past five years, Pleasantville STRONG has shifted the discussion on how the community views the threat of illegal drugs, alcohol abuse and tobacco to youngsters.

But despite widespread support, the organization will be challenged to remain active and become fiscally sustainable.

The coalition was established in 2015 by a group of Pleasantville residents concerned with the rising opioid epidemic and drug use. The year before, Pleasantville resident John Mueller, currently the Yonkers police commissioner, was involved with Pleasantville 2026, a five-year strategic plan that examined health and well-being of Pleasantville School District students. That served as the jumping-off point for Pleasantville STRONG.

Mueller, one of its founding members, worked to combat and reduce under-age drinking, drug use and other detrimental behaviors by youth in the community. It was not only the coalition's mission, but one being tackled by municipalities and other committed allies such as school districts, youth groups, law enforcement, local governments and houses of worship. Creation of Pleasantville STRONG brought these stakeholders together.

Once organized, the coalition received

a Drug-Free Communities (DFC) federal grant of \$125,000 a year for five years and has since reapplied for an additional five years of funding. The grant stipulates that community groups work collaboratively to deal with substance abuse.

"It was a wonderful and unique grant," said Nicole Malgarinos, the outgoing coalition coordinator, Pleasantville resident and parent of a 15-year-old son. "We used the grant to get competent local data about under-age substance use and mental and emotional health. The data is what informs our action plans."

One part of the action plan was a massive survey taken of Pleasantville youth in grades 7-12, which would be compared to another survey two years later.

"We think about our benchmark data and how that guides us," Malgarinos explained. "The data has shown us that since 2015 to the present there has been a 30 percent reduction across the board for use in all substances."

The DFC grant also paid to bring aboard Mary Ann Flatley, a licensed mental health counselor who is the student assistance counselor for the Pleasantville School District. Flatley has engaged with students and parents on a regular basis about addiction to vaping, marijuana and alcohol. Eventually, the school district funded about 80 percent of her salary.

"When Mary Ann is in a classroom talking about a particular topic, the coalition coordinates doing that same talk with parents and community members," Malgarinos said. "What the students are hearing we are mirroring for the adults. Also, from our parent forums we hear what they are seeing and hearing, we know most kids are not using substances."

The challenge for Malgarinos was changing the public's perception of what might be happening in their own community.

"It took a tremendous amount of work and money to do that because it's not a conversation people want to have," she said. "But for five years we've been having those conversations and making real changes."

Since its inception, Pleasantville STRONG has created strong partnerships with the Village of Pleasantville, which oversees the funding, the Village Board, the Pleasantville School District and youth officers from the Pleasantville Police Department, among other parties.

"We work with all of these groups on a weekly basis," said Shane McGaffey, chairman of the Pleasantville STRONG Steering Committee and a Board of Education member. "We have all of these groups coming to our weekly meetings and it shows how unified all the different agencies are in addressing these issues. We don't sweep the issues under the

rug; we're dealing with them and getting results."

Remaining financially sustainable when the federal grant runs out will be a challenge. The path to that, Malgarinos said, is for Pleasantville STRONG to become a nonprofit organization and raise funds within the community.

Malgarino's five-year stint as coordinator officially ended at the end of September, and she will be working with Westchester County's mental health services. She also expects to be involved in choosing her successor. The village has received a handful of applications for the position and will be interviewing applicants in the next couple of weeks, McGaffey said.

Looking back on her role with Pleasantville STRONG, Malgarinos said her biggest accomplishment was witnessing the many partnerships that were formed because of the coalition's efforts.

"The buy-in, the compassion and dedication our community has shown has astounded me," she said. "I've heard from many people that have an idea about how to keep our kids healthy and they ask me if their idea is possible – things like that are a remarkable testimony to how invested folks are. That piece for me is so humbling."

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**Adam Stone**  
astone@theexaminernews.com  
Publisher

**Martin Wilbur**  
mwilbur@theexaminernews.com  
Editor-in-Chief

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## Column

### It's Perfectly Fine to Go and Uncork the Champagne

By Adam Stone

I'm here to cheer you up today.

To all the people who have spent the past four years dedicating a considerable portion of their emotional energy to the hope that Trump would be rejected in 2020 and are now depressed because the verdict wasn't enough of a repudiation, I have news for you: you're confused.

Granted, it would be great if about 45 to 48 percent of people at any given time couldn't imagine endorsing Trump's re-election. But we knew these numbers to be fact for the past four years. If that thought depressed you last Monday, the day before the election, it shouldn't depress you or surprise you more now that we've received results. Anything else is just an (understandably) emotional reaction.

More importantly, just imagine this scenario: Late last Tuesday night, the networks announced that Biden won the following states that Hillary Clinton lost: Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona and yes, wait for it, deep south, historically ruby-red GEORGIA! And, moments later, the networks reported that Biden won the most votes in U.S. presidential election history, secured the same number of electoral votes as Trump in 2016, and called him President-elect Biden.

Now imagine a week later, drunk from champagne celebrations, you happen to hear that Trump eked out Florida and won North Carolina and Ohio, where Trump was always favored. At most, it would barely register. If anything, you'd probably hear that Biden performed reasonably well in Texas, and you'd be thrilled by the news and related 2024 re-election prospects.

In terms of wins and losses, there were no major surprises. You can claim insufficient margins in some states but some of those likely won't even be all that close at the end of the day. For those that are relatively close, stop quibbling.

Granted, it's soul crushing to learn good people aren't repulsed by a bad man but we knew that already, it should be baked into your result-processing cake.

But the Democrats didn't win the Senate, you say! OK, let's talk about that. First of all, they still have a chance to win the Senate in January special elections, factoring in Kamala Harris as a tie-breaking vote. Second, they were never considered a lock, not even close. If you were expecting with near-guaranteed cosmic certitude that Lindsey Graham would lose South Carolina, where Trump won decisively, you were misinformed. Also, isn't your main point that Trump is a monster we need gone?

We need to return to our admittedly subpar version of normalcy? A Senate with Mitch McConnell possessing a narrow majority, with a president keen on compromise, civility and moderation, with Susan Collins eager to flex her moderate muscles, seems to come close to at least the possibility of achieving that subpar normalcy.

If you're further to the left, and were expecting or hoping for dramatic reform, you have reason to be disappointed but you don't have reason to be terribly surprised or to think the result is undemocratic. Divided government would be an accurate and fair reflection of our times, not a departure from it.

But many Democrats up and down the ballot lost elections, you say! First of all, stop expecting Republicans to be Democrats. A sizable number of traditional, non-Trump conservatives wanted to express their conservatism by voting for Republicans and not voting for Trump. Also, Democrats came out to vote for Democrats. It's just that in many elections, in part driven by Trump turnout, Democrats lost. That happens. Second of all, not getting exactly what you wanted and more isn't cause for depression. Go to work on the next election, this is what

democracy is all about.

But Trump didn't suffer a significant enough loss in the electoral college, you say! You've been correctly complaining about the electoral college for the past two decades, ever since Al Gore won the popular vote and lost the election. You argue that nothing more vividly illustrates the majority opinion than the popular vote. Well, do you believe that or not?

If you believe that, within the scope of what you realistically considered possible, what percentage of the vote were you needing Biden to win in order to celebrate? Maybe a slight majority in a deeply divided country? A slight majority that eluded Hillary Clinton? A slight majority that was resounding enough to win the electoral college, too, via the exact states that Biden was hoping to flip? YOU GOT EXACTLY THAT! The only difference is you didn't find out quickly enough to your satisfaction. It became mathematically clear on Wednesday instead of Tuesday. That's it.

By the way, there's no such thing as "catching up" in elections. The total vote is what it is. Sometimes, it just takes a while to count. Many states you thought were close on Tuesday are not close. Biden is winning many states convincingly, within the context of American elections.

So, if you have spent the last four years praying for this moment, and you're sitting there down in the dumps due to an understandable emotional reaction stemming from 2016 election night trauma, get up and go celebrate. Don't let a confused, emotional reaction to the order of results dictate your mood.

This country still has countless problems, and surely difficult days ahead. That doesn't mean you can't recognize a multimillion-vote spread as a win. You got what you wanted. Go uncork the Champagne. Cheer up.

*Adam Stone is the publisher of Examiner Media.*

## Letter to the Editor

### Poll Workers Do an Admirable Job in Ensuring Everyone's Right to Vote

I had the privilege of being a first-time election inspector/poll worker last Tuesday. We were required to undergo hands-on training with the equipment as well as instruction on proper protocols and successfully pass an examination to be considered to serve.

What most voters probably do not know, is that when they approach the table to vote, there is one representative from each party present. That being said, there is no "us" and "them" on Election Day. When it comes time to vote, we are all united in ensuring that every registered voter had the opportunity to cast their ballot and be heard.

Our election district is relatively small, but nonetheless, a number of situations

arose wherein there was some question about a voter's registration. All of these were handled without partisanship and in a manner that ensured the right to vote. In each and every case, that person cast their ballot. Some instances require a separate procedure wherein the Board of Elections will ultimately determine the propriety of the ballot; however, in each and every case, that person voted.

"Electioneering" is prohibited in the polling place and there were a few voters displaying clothing demonstrating support for their candidate. They were asked politely to cover up the particular article, and in one case, the individual became indignant and refused;

nonetheless, they were permitted to vote. Notwithstanding petty rulebreakers who seek to influence others, our job is to ensure our citizens' right to vote is not infringed.

As the country is on edge awaiting the final tallies of the national election, rest assured those who are entrusted with ensuring the system is fairly administered, "where the rubber meets the road," do their jobs regardless of any party affiliation or personal preference. America's greatness should be measured by this democracy in action.

**Charlie Luceno**  
Yorktown Heights

**SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS**



# Bedford School Officials Want In-Person Instruction Around Thanksgiving

By Martin Wilbur

Bedford school officials tamped down rising speculation last week that they were considering all-remote learning just prior to and the week after Thanksgiving because of concern that travel or family get-togethers could trigger spread of COVID-19.

At last week's Board of Education meeting, Vice President Edward Reder clarified previous statements he made suggesting that the possibility of families traveling or having holiday celebrations could pose increased risk. Reder said he recognized that younger children and special education students need to have as much in-person instruction as possible.

"I think we're always concerned but I'm not as concerned about the week after Thanksgiving or the week of Thanksgiving as I was before," Reder said.

Comments blew up on social media that the district might consider going remote immediately preceding and following the long holiday weekend.

Board member Michael Bauscher said he believes the district's policies and procedures are strong enough where across-the-board closures can be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

"I think our system is in place to respond to that and so I think, as I did there, taking days away from students before we have to, I don't think we should," Bauscher said.

The discussion occurred just as cases throughout the region and Westchester

County have begun to multiply, forcing some school districts to switch to online learning for some of their students. In Bedford, Fox Lane Middle School is closed this week mainly because a rising number of teachers and staff members are under quarantine, making for insufficient staffing for in-person instruction, a letter from Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joel Adelberg stated.

According to the state's COVID-19 Report Card, which tracks positive cases of the virus among students and staff members at each school, there were 19

students throughout the district's seven schools that had tested positive as of last Friday. At that time there was only one teacher or staff member who were positive but a significant number of teachers are quarantining because of potential exposures.

The district has afforded families the opportunity for their children to attend classes in person and also be able to go to remote learning when they would like to. However, Adelberg said there are extra challenges when students want to

opt back into in-person instruction. Space and distancing needs to be arranged and it sometimes is not always feasible right away, he said.

"That's where the number of seats, the space, the social distancing in a classroom in a school matters," Adelberg said. "Here to back and where your assigned seat is matters. So we can't just have students who show up who were home and now change their mind on a Tuesday and want to come back to school."

## The Bear Facts

Brewster High School's student newspaper, Bear Facts, was recently awarded first place in the 2020 American Scholastic Press Association's newspaper competition. Club adviser Rob LoAlbo and new co-adviser Kayla Corvino, who is stepping in after Cynthia Amuso retired, are excited to see what the staff will accomplish this year. At right is a photo of LoAlbo and Corvino and the newspaper's staff members celebrating their recognition during a recent Google Meet.



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# State Cancels January Regents Exams Due to Pandemic

By Anna Young

Regents exams for high school students in New York will be canceled in January as the state continues to grapple with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The state Education Department (SED) announced last Thursday that all January exams will be canceled, noting the shift in focus to the health and well-being of students during the current crisis. No decision has been made yet regarding the June and August Regents exams, officials said.

"We determined the January Regents exams could not be safely, equitably and fairly administered across the state given where the pandemic currently stands," said

Interim State Education Commissioner Betty Rosa. "We will continue to monitor applicable data and make a decision on other state assessment programs as the school year progresses, being mindful of the evolving situation."

According to SED, officials will propose modifications to the assessment requirements that students must meet to earn high school diplomas, credentials and endorsements at the December Board of Regents meeting.

Currently, students are required to take and pass these statewide standardized examinations, which measure their achievement and knowledge in high school

core curriculum. They include English, science, social studies and math.

The modifications will apply to all students who are completing a secondary-level course of study or make-up program in January and are scheduled to participate in one or more of the January Regents exams, officials said. Additionally, to ensure students aren't adversely impacted by the decision, SED will ask the Board of Regents to adopt emergency regulations pertaining to the assessment requirements that students must meet to earn diplomas.

Under the proposed emergency regulations, students who were planning to take one or more Regents examinations in

January 2021 at the conclusion of a course of study or makeup program will be exempt from the requirements pertaining to passing the Regents exam to be issued a diploma.

To qualify for the exemption, the student must be currently enrolled in a course of study that would ordinarily culminate in the taking of a January 2021 Regents exam and earn credit for such course of study by the end of the semester; or between Sept. 1, 2020, and the end of the semester, successfully complete a make-up program for the purpose of earning course credit; or prepare to take a required Regents exam to graduate at the end of the first semester of the 2020-21 school year.



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## Carmel Teachers' Association to Hold Thanksgiving Luncheon for Seniors

Senior citizens living within the Carmel Central School District are invited to a curbside, contactless "To-Go," Thanksgiving luncheon at the Knights of Columbus Hall located at 10 Fair St. in Carmel on Thursday, Nov. 19 between 2 and 3:30 p.m.

The meal will be prepared by Three Brothers Restaurant & Pizzeria and will include roasted turkey with gravy, stuffing, whipped potatoes, cranberry sauce, dinner rolls, vegetables and dessert.

The Carmel Teachers' Association is sponsoring the luncheon. There will be no charge to the seniors.

There are 75 meals available for pickup. Reservations are required by this Friday, Nov. 13.

Reservations may be made by calling the Putnam County Office for Senior Resources at 845-808-1700 ext. 47100. In case of inclement weather, the event will be held on Friday, Nov. 20.



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### Q: What is Immunotherapy?

**A:** Your immune system is a network of cells, tissues, and organs that work together to keep you healthy by defending your body against harmful invaders. Immunotherapy is a cancer treatment that uses your immune system to thwart cancer cells. Immunotherapies are often used in combination with traditional chemotherapy medications to boost the effectiveness of those regimens.

### Q: Are there different types of immunotherapy treatments?

**A:** Yes. The first, called "checkpoint inhibitors," are drugs that help your immune system respond more strongly to a tumor by blocking the proteins that keep T-cells from killing cancer cells.

Another type of immunotherapy, "adoptive cell transfer," boosts the natural ability of your T-cells to fight cancer. In this treatment, T-cells are taken from your tumor, and those that are found to be most active against your cancer are grown in large batches in the lab, and then eventually returned to your body to fight off the cancer.

Next are "monoclonal antibodies," which are immune-system proteins produced in a lab. These antibodies are designed to attach to specific targets found on cancer cells. Some monoclonal antibodies mark cancer cells so they will be better seen and destroyed by the immune

system. Another immunotherapy agent is a vaccine called "BCG" that is instilled directly into the bladder to attack very early bladder cancer.

### Who is a good candidate for immunotherapy?

**A:** The best candidates for immunotherapy are patients whose disease may have a genetic component. We test for a number of things to see whether a patient's particular tumor may be due to a genetic cancer syndrome. Those types of tumors seem to have better susceptibility to immunotherapies. Whether or not immunotherapy is used alone or with other treatments is determined on a case-by-case basis.

### What are treatments like?

**A:** Immunotherapy can be administered intravenously, orally, topically (for very early skin cancers), or intravesically (directly into the bladder). How often and how long the patient receives immunotherapy depends on the type of cancer and how advanced it is, the immunotherapy agents themselves, and how the patient tolerates and responds to the medications. Exciting new uses of immunotherapy agents are seen on a regular basis, says the doctor. They're really making their way through the treatment of many different types of cancers now. This is the cutting edge of oncological care.



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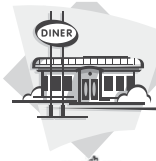
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# Croton Weighs Legislation to Ban Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers By 2023

By Anna Young

Croton-on-Hudson officials are considering a proposal that would outlaw gas-powered leaf blowers year-round by 2023.

During the Oct. 26 Village Board work session, the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) presented revisions of the proposal that would see a phased in approach, with an emphasis on educating the public on what the law would entail. Officials are aiming to shift to electric machinery to protect the environment, limit health risks and regulate noise pollution.

“When we heard the feedback from the village and village residents, we decided we needed to revisit our timeline (and) that under the current circumstances that would not be feasible at all,” CAC Chair Janet Monahan said. “We decided to stretch it out all the way to 2023.”

The latest revision proposes a seasonal ban in 2021 from May to October, with legislation prohibiting gas-powered leaf blowers from January to October in 2022. In 2023, the village would institute a full ban, with continued year-round education.

According to the proposal, the village can still permit the use of gas- or electric-powered blowers after a storm during any time of the year should it be needed. Under



the proposed law, the Hudson National Golf Club would be exempt.

Violators would be subject to a \$250 fine for the first offense, \$500 for the second infraction and \$1,000 for the third and any subsequent offenses. Convictions would be deemed a violation, with fines levied against the offender or the party who employed the person and the property owner, according to the proposal.

“We really truly believe that education is a key component to this,” Monahan said. “That was another reason why we decided to stretch it out because we did not have the time to get the education background to the residents that we wanted to.”

Currently, the operation of leaf blowers

or other motorized lawn or garden equipment is allowed Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., excluding holidays, Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Sunday between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

While officials agree with elements of the proposal, Village Manager Janine King recommended the board implement the seasonal ban in 2021 and revisit the proposal and its effectiveness before heading into 2022 in case adjustments need to be made.

“If the board does decide to go ahead with the seasonal ban for 2021, I think it would be cleaner to pass the law on the seasonal ban and then revisit how it goes

before you legislate a future year,” King said.

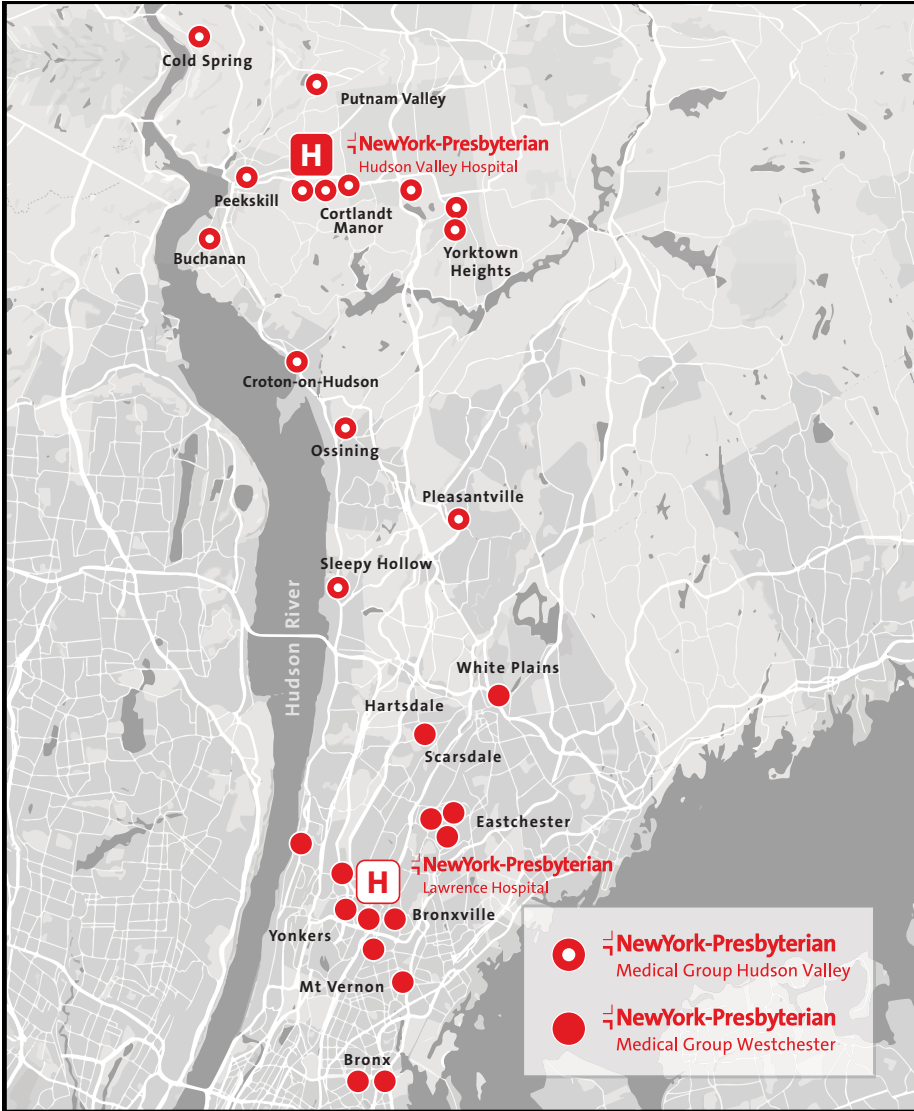
Officials also questioned if residents would know the difference between a gas-powered or electric leaf blower before issuing a complaint to Village Hall.

Mayor Brian Pugh implored the CAC to speak to other Westchester municipalities with leaf blower regulations to determine if residents are aware of the difference. He also requested data be gathered to determine if a seasonal ban has made a difference in other communities and how often citations are written.

If passed, Croton-on-Hudson would join about a dozen other Westchester municipalities that have passed laws regulating gas-powered lawn equipment. Most recently, New Castle officials unanimously approved a law in September prohibiting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers from June 1 through Sept. 30.

Pleasantville officials are also discussing a ban to curtail noise and air pollution and limit health impacts. The proposed ordinance would allow leaf blowers to be used only in spring for two weeks and for a three-week period in fall. The weeks where they could be used would depend on the weather. Operation would be allowed after 10 a.m. on Saturday and after noon on Sunday.

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# Fixtures: What Stays and What Goes

As a realtor, I've experienced buyers and sellers who seem perfectly nice and normal throughout the sales transaction until the possibility that they may suddenly lose their cool over something minor.

Such was the case when one of my sellers asked at the last moment whether a modest chandelier over the kitchen table could be excluded among the fixtures included in the sale.

"Oh no, you don't," the buyer said, "it wasn't excluded in the listing!" And the fight began. The seller had forgotten to discuss the chandelier's exclusion on the listing with me, his listing agent. It was a very ordinary fixture, surely one not worth fighting about.

"But we bought it early on in our marriage," the seller protested to his agent. "Our family gathered under it every morning at breakfast, every night at dinner," he was reported to have said.

And so it went. But my buyer didn't relent. I appealed to his better judgment.

"That chandelier is an inexpensive Tiffany reproduction," I argued, "and couldn't have cost more than \$100. I'll buy one that's more than twice its quality as a closing gift for you," I said.

"No, I want that one," he responded.



By Bill Primavera

It looked as though it was going to come to a showdown. Just prior to this incident I had heard a story about how the sale of a home was lost because the seller had changed her mind about leaving her washer and dryer at a house because those particular models, with which she had fallen in love, had been discontinued and she didn't want to risk her emotional health with trying another brand.

Oh, my goodness, I declared, you're going to risk losing a house over a matter like a cheap chandelier? I admonished the buyer. Sanity finally prevailed and the seller was allowed to keep the fixture to which he was so strongly attached.

Shortly after that experience, I was involved in another dispute – and you guessed it – it also involved lighting fixtures. This time it was in a gorgeous historic home when the seller had affixed the highest-grade wall sconces and chandeliers you could imagine in every room, all quite appropriate to their 18th century surroundings. My buyers oohed and aahed over every one of them in every room.

Only after they decided to make an offer after the first showing did I make the inquiry of the seller's agent about exclusions and, sure enough, I found that



the lighting fixtures were "available for sale." My buyers were not happy and neither was I. I appealed to the seller, stating that the sale might be lost over the issue, and thankfully he relented.

Give yourself a test. Which of the following items would normally not be included as fixtures in the sale of a home: built-in stereo system, electric garage door opener, wall-to-wall carpet, built-in microwave oven, water heater, dishwasher, built-in stove, drapes, refrigerator, washer and dryer?

You are correct if you answered that the last four items are not included. All the other items are automatically included since they are attached and have become fixtures.

The literature on the subject is somewhat simplistic. For instance, lumber sitting by the side of a house is personal property because it is not permanently

attached to the structure or the land, and is therefore not included in a home's sale price; however, when that lumber is nailed or bolted together to become a fence, the wood fence is a fixture attached to the land and is included in the sale.

Oddly, while the examples I gave about chandeliers would identify them as fixtures, their light bulbs are not permanently attached to the structure so they remain personal property. Very few sellers remove their light bulbs from the light fixtures (as they are entitled to do) unless it's a particularly contentious sale. (Although, when I sold my first home, I ended up hating my buyer so much that I removed every light bulb from the house and every roll of toilet paper from the bathrooms. Hopefully, I've matured since those early years.)

If a home seller wants to exclude a fixture from the sale, it must be specifically itemized and excluded in the sales contract.

When a dispute arises whether or not an item is included in a home sale, it is accepted practice that courts favor a) buyer over seller, b) tenant over landlord and c) lender over borrower.

Well, I guess we all know where we stand in such battles.

While Bill Primavera has enjoyed careers as a journalist and publicist, he is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate, serving northern Westchester and Putnam counties. To engage the services of The Home Guru team to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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# Rising COVID-19 Positivity Rates Puts Jacob Burns Opening on Hold

By Martin Wilbur

The Jacob Burns Film Center in Pleasantville will remain closed until at least early January after rising COVID-19 caseloads has put the brakes on any reopening.

“With local COVID-19 infection rates on the rise, we have made the difficult decision not to reopen our theater in the near future,” Margo Amgott, the film center’s interim executive director, said in a statement. “While we want nothing more than to present arthouse films

on the big screen to an eager audience, the safety of our community and our staff is our highest priority.

Amgott said the film center is planning on an early January reopening, which marks the start of its 20th anniversary year.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo allowed movie theaters outside of New York City to reopen on Oct. 23 as long as the county in which they were located had a COVID-19 positivity rate of less than 2 percent on a 14-day rolling average. As of Thursday, the seven-day rolling average in

Westchester stood at 2.2 percent and reached 2 percent on the 14-day average in the county for the first time since June 7, according to the state’s COVID-19 tracker.

There were another 178 new cases in Westchester on Thursday.

Denise Treco, the director of communications and marketing for the film center, said once Cuomo made the announcement that movie theaters could open, the Jacob Burns staff began working hard to welcome back patrons. The move was a disappointment but it was the

best decision to make, she said.

Film center leadership had decided against rushing into operation in late October, preferring to properly prepare for the occasion. Films have been presented virtually to the public online.

“We continue to monitor infection rates daily and will share reopening dates and film titles as soon as it is prudent to bring you, our audience, back to the JBFC in person,” Amgott said.

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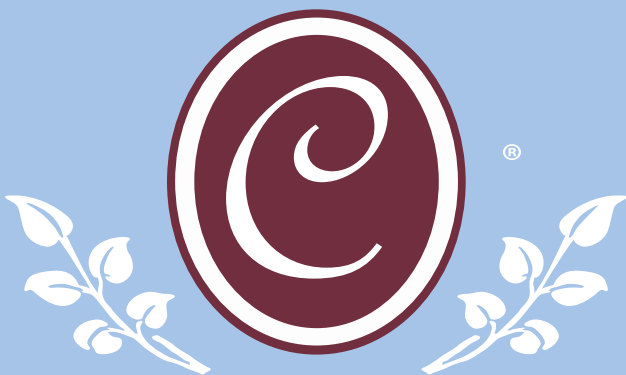
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# Symbols are What You Make of Them: On Eagle's Wings

By Brian Kluepfel

Much has been and will be written about the 2020 elections, but from the narrow point of view of birders, Joe Biden's victory is a win against an administration that tried to amend, among other laws, the century-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

From a broader perspective, it is a victory for the environment, which to me means it's a victory for everyone (though not everyone feels this way, obviously).

The sturm und drang of recent times led me to thinking about symbolism, and in particular, our national symbol, the bald eagle. President-elect Biden quoted the hymn "On Eagle's Wings" in his Nov. 7 victory speech.

For its supporters, it's a beautiful, majestic raptor, which is an appropriate icon, especially now that the ban on DDT has rescued it from extinction. Yet for the baldie's detractors, they see a large bird which bullies other animals and steals their food. It's not the only animal that does this, but Ben Franklin noted this habit in his argument against the United States embracing the bird as our symbol.

Of course, the eagle is everywhere as a symbol. For example, Poland has had the bird on its coat of arms for centuries, through kingdoms, communism and democracy. The White Eagle remained while governments rose and fell. Of course, historians cannot forget that the National Socialists of Germany – Hitler's gangsters – adopted the eagle as Germany's

symbol during a horrific time not too far in history's rearview mirror.

I believe that we humans must aspire to our better angels and better animal instincts; the eagle is only a sticker on your bumper or a painting in a gallery. We have to try to imbue ourselves with its strength and power while rejecting its thievery and bullying. We have that choice, every day.

Another common avian symbol, a bit to our south, is the Andean condor. A magnificent bird – the world's largest terrestrial bird, boasting a 10-foot-plus wingspan – the condor does not have murderous talons of the eagle, so it acts principally as a much-needed scavenger, cleaning up carcasses in a day that would take other predators far longer to dispense. Importantly, in terms of disease, it gets the nasty stuff out of the ecosystem in an efficient, quick manner.

The immense condor has been, like the eagle, a symbolic spirit animal of Andean natives for millennia. Many tribes saw it a messenger between earth and the heavens. More recently, the Andean nations of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile have adopted it as their national bird. Seeing one this year near Salento, Colombia was indeed one of the greatest



thrills of my birding life.

But like the eagle, the condor has been misappropriated by bad people. In the 1970s, a cabal of South American dictators implemented a continent-wide "Operation Condor," which resulted in the jailing and death of thousands of leftist sympathizers. (Most of the countries who adopted the condor as their symbol also allowed 'Condor' to kill thousands of their citizens.) The

works of Pinochet, Banzer and their cohorts scarred a generation (60,000 deaths) and are a collective stain on humanity. The United States supported and helped to plan Operation Condor through several Democratic and Republican presidencies.

Eagles are eagles; condors are condors. Make of them what you will as symbols. I hope they represent freedom and a respect for the natural world, wherever they fly. It is what you do as a human being every day that matters. How you treat others and the world around you speaks a lot louder than an eagle tattoo on your bicep.

*Brian Kluepfel is the editor of the Saw Mill River Audubon (SMRA) newsletter as well as an author for the bestselling travel guidebook series Lonely Planet. He encourages you to support SMRA's activities.*

## For The Birds

## THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

**Words of the Month Club - November Edition.** This week the quiz words come from the November entries found in the book "The Cabinet of Linguistic Curiosities" by Paul Anthony Jones. The book is "A yearbook of forgotten words" that features a "curious or long-forgotten word of the day, picked from the more obscure corners of the dictionary."

1. **belue** (n.)

A) a raised platform      B) a whale      C) a beautiful view
2. **mysterifical** (adj.)

A) not open to question      B) fictitious      C) mystery-creating
3. **vandemonianism** (n.)

A) inflated pride      B) rowdy behavior      C) the primary cause
4. **decussate** (v.)

A) to mark with an X      B) promise solemnly      C) set apart
5. **cataractine** (adj.)

A) resembling a waterfall      B) infectious      C) occurring by chance
6. **laqueary** (n.)

A) acclaim      B) a bestowed honor      C) a ceiling
7. **anfract** (n.)

A) an artful skill      B) a winding route      C) strong displeasure
8. **lown** (n.)

A) a soft cry      B) a pleasant light      C) a calm state

4. A. To mark with an X; to cross or intersect in an X-shape
3. B. Rowdy, unmannerly behavior
2. C. Mystery-creating
1. B. A great beast or sea monster; a whale
5. A. Resembling a waterfall
6. C. A ceiling; the roof of a room
7. B. A winding, circuitous route
8. C. A calm or quiet state; an area of calm seas
- ANSWERS:



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# A Few of the Much-Needed Retreats to Visit Close to Home

It might be November, but I'm sticking with the garden theme as long as Mother Nature permits.

Being outdoors, it seems, is the best pandemic salvation I have experienced in the past nine months; it's guilt-free, and well, free. With so much that is beyond my control, finding that space to modulate stress, manage expectations and find contentment has become a daily pursuit.

Weekdays, with a full-time job, family, demands of balancing the ever-changing remote school model, Zoom calls, classes, virtual social and professional events, the restorative outdoor antidote is limited to walks with the dog in the neighborhood.

Weekends, however, with so many fewer kids' commitments, there is a lot of time to fill. I've been finding new destinations to explore and revisiting old favorites; all of them bring me the peace, joy and gratitude I need to thrive (and to survive this crazy campaign season). Taking a page from

the count-your-blessings playbook, our spectacular fall foliage and crisp weather have made these detours even better.

## Lasdon Park, Arboretum & Veterans Memorial

No matter how often I visit Lasdon Park, regardless of the season, I always feel as if it is my first time. There is so much to immerse yourself in at this gem of a Westchester County park.

Recently, I spent an afternoon in the Chinese Friendship Garden. It was at the peak of the fall foliage there, and just the walk to the garden could have been enough. The towering trees create almost a "tunnel effect" as they nearly block out the sky with their leaves. The path is dotted with teas of the Chinese pavilion, bamboo plants and pond created through the collaboration of the county's sister city, Jinzhou, China.

The garden feels as though it is in China, and has many spaces for meditation and reflection, especially inside the pavilion with

its traditional architectural style and stunning artistic renderings on the ceiling.

What not to miss: The conservatory. The American Chestnut Grove, discovered on the property and where, in collaboration with the American Chestnut Foundation, they are working on developing a disease-resistant chestnut tree. Activities for kids include the (seasonal) Dinosaur Garden and the annual train show.

Lasdon is also home to the Westchester County Veterans Museum. Admission, except for special events, is free. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the shop and indoor spaces have limited capacity, but the outdoor space is naturally spacious, making this the perfect pandemic escape close to home.

*Lasdon Park, Arboretum & Veterans Memorial, 2610 Amawalk Rd. (Route 35), Katonah, N.Y. 10536. Info: Visit [www.lasdonpark.org](http://www.lasdonpark.org).*

## Untermeyer Park and Gardens

Untermeyer Gardens is another Westchester County treasure, specifically part of a partnership with the City of Yonkers, and a gift that keeps on giving as each stage of restoration evolves and is completed.

Having grown up in a river town, just a few miles to the north, my memories of this breathtaking property on the banks of the Hudson River were far from stellar. For years after the death of the property owner and creator of the gardens, lawyer and businessman Samuel Untermeyer, fell into disrepair. The foundation of the walled garden, amphitheater, reflecting pool, stage and more were retained along with the remains of the original plantings.

Under the guidance of the Untermeyer Gardens Conservancy since 2011, much has been meticulously restored. Visits are free and the restoration of the infrastructure and spectacular horticultural reclamation makes this both a quintessential pandemic retreat and a local historical and sensory immersion that is wide open with legendary river views. Timed reservations are required at this time.



By Nancy Sorbella

What not to miss: The Persian Pool. Part of the lower terrace of the Walled Garden, once the family swimming pool and now the subject of a restoration effort, is a critical view into the reclamation and revitalization of this local treasure.

Then there is the Grand Holiday Illumination. This is a run-don't-walk experience. There is nothing like strolling through

the artistically lighted garden spaces, listening to classical music and drinking hot chocolate served by generous volunteers on a cold December night. Best of all, it's free. It's scheduled from Dec. 12 though Jan. 3.

*Untermeyer Park and Gardens, 945 Broadway, Yonkers, N.Y. 10701. Info: Visit [www.undermyergardens.org](http://www.undermyergardens.org).*

## New York Botanical Garden

New York Botanical Garden remains my favorite oasis in the middle of the Bronx. There is so much to appreciate that regular visits are necessary. Each occasion has been its own experience; enjoying the 250 acres of gardens and collections through the lens of four seasons.

Now, there is more online programming but recently we decided to walk the paths and appreciate the native plantings, winding trails of perennials, the forest, the Rose Garden, waterfalls and views of the legendary Enid Haupt Conservatory. Access to some gardens and amenities is limited due to the pandemic. The silver lining is going and not being "entertained" but finding your own joy in the permanent landscape. Timed reservations are required at this time and there is an admission fee.

What not to miss: During the holiday season, the outdoor decorations can inspire even the most novice gardener. The Holiday Train Show is a never-miss, but this year admission will be limited.

All-year kids' workshops, which are now virtual now, and the Edible Academy makes it the spot for family education.

*The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, N.Y. 10458. Info: Visit [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org).*

## A Spiritual View

By Rev. Nils Chittenden

Now that we have a victor in the presidential election, one thing that will almost certainly stay just the same is the rampant tribalism which runs through so much of our society right now.

Political tribalism has been growing over the decades. At a congressional level, it's destroying the kind of bipartisan cooperation which we often used to see. But it's infected the rest of us, too. We've become so wrapped up in our own political tribe that it's conditioned our instincts to believe that there can't be anything good about the other tribe.

And social media has made it even easier to retrench into those positions, so that from the comfort of our homes we can savage our political foes, without all of the messy awkwardness of having to say it face to face.

Why does it have to be like this? Well, I guess much of it is human nature. Seeking out and being with people who are just like us makes us feel safe, secure and affirmed. And one way to prove our allegiance to our tribe is to join in the hate for the other tribe.

A wise priest once said to me that most people thought that the opposite of love was hate, but he thought that the opposite of love was actually fear.

That insight has stayed with me. I honestly don't think most of us harbor hate; I suspect, rather, that we are fearful of what we don't understand or know.

It takes a lot of courage to step outside the comfort of our tribe and extend the hand of friendship and reconciliation to the other. For example, purposely looking for and acknowledging the good things that President Trump has done during his time in office, and doing the same for his predecessor.

I know that last bit may have made you spit out your coffee in outrage, but until we as a society can do that, we're not going to heal the deep wounds we've inflicted on each other. That doesn't

mean we don't hold them to account for the bad things. Rather, it's about adopting an instinctive reaction that is loving, rather than fearful.

It's what God wants us to do because everyone is equally loved by God as his precious child. Because God loves Donald Trump and Joe Biden as much as he loves you. Which is to infinity and beyond.

*Rev. Nils Chittenden is rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Armonk and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Congregation B'nai Yisrael, Hillside Church, St. Patrick's RC Church and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.*



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# A Diversion on Our Virtual Tour of Italian Wine Regions



By Nick Antonaccio

This week we resume our series of trekking through Italy, in search of lesser-known grapes grown in the midst of historic regions. I trust you've picked up a few ideas for new wines with which to experiment, and wine regions to explore in the (near- mid- or long-term?) pandemic-restrictive future.

I'm having an internal tug of war this week in deciding which region to explore. My heart, and my palate, yearns to explore Tuscany. It is the one region for which I hold the fondest memories of Italy and for which I continue to compare every other region in Italy. The history, architecture, art and landscape – and of course, the food and wine – are unsurpassed as a total cultural experience.

No other region evokes such passion. The five regions we've trekked through thus far on our virtual Italian tour have each had elements of the lure and attraction of Tuscany, but not the ethereal, all-consuming experience of La Bella Vita that is Tuscany.

Campania has its great Aglianico wines, which I prefer over Tuscany's Chiantis. Sicily

has its ancient Greek temples and artifacts, built well before the Etruscans settled in Tuscany. The Veneto region has Venice, a European power centuries before the Medicis aspired to the same lofty status in Florence. Piedmont's rolling hills and hilltop villages offer more photo-ops than the nooks and crannies of Tuscany. Friuli has mesmerizing and plentiful white wines, sorely lacking in Tuscany.

But alas, our virtual journey twists and turns along the Italian wine route, with many detours before we arrive in Tuscany.

So, where to next? Where to find a region that is most Tuscan-like, that may even fill in the few gaps that are easily overlooked in my obsessive fascination with all things Tuscan?

As we travel southeast from our last stop, Piedmont, Tuscany lures us and our Alfa

Romeo seemingly takes on a life of its own and heads in the direction of Florence. But at a critical crossroad on the Autostrada, we bear left, not right. A few hundred kilometers later, southeast of Tuscany, enveloped on three sides by mountains, we begin to see the milepost markers

for Perugia, Assisi, Orvieto and Montefalco. This is the region of Umbria, the stepchild of Tuscany.

Umbria is a land of ancient people and ancient vines that continues to exude the essence of Italian culture: rich and elegant



history intertwined with the simple life. Here we find the elegant city of Perugia, with the buildings of its famous chocolate industry sitting over a subterranean ancient Roman city; the internationally acclaimed arts festival of Spoleto; the famous Duomos of Orvieto and Assisi presiding over the olive groves, vineyards and truffle-rich forests below their bell towers; and the storied wines produced by the winemakers in Montefalco.

On to the grapes.

Sangiovese, the heart of Chianti and Brunello wines, and therefore Tuscany, also dominates the wines of Umbria. But there are two other grapes that have become symbolic of the emerging popularity of Umbrian wines.

Sagrantino: The warm summers, tempered by the breezes of the Apennine Mountains, aid in producing long growing seasons in the subregion of Montefalco. The resulting wines are rich and unctuous, with strong tannins (uncharacteristically sweet) critical for aging. A profile of blackberries and earthy forest floors dominates the wines. This grape has mesmerized me for years. It was even my "new favorite" for several months.

Grechetto: A crisp, dry wine with notes of apples and pungent herbs. Although it has an enticing, creamy mouthfeel, the influence of the chalky soils of the region adds a clean minerality and a tangy acidity. It is also a component of the famous Orvieto wines of this region. Grechetto and the other Umbrian white grape, Trebbiano, together produce more white wine than in all of Tuscany.

Just on the other side of the Apennines from Tuscany lies a land rich in history that modern times has seemingly ignored. But as an alternative to Tuscany, Umbria is every bit as fascinating, with a cultural and gastronomic ethos sure to please the most discerning traveler.

Nick Antonaccio is a 45-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years, he has conducted wine tastings and lectures. Nick is a member and program director of the Wine Media Guild of wine journalists. He also offers personalized wine tastings and wine travel services. Nick's credo: continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior. You can reach him at [nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com](mailto:nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com) or on Twitter @sharingwine.

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# Fall Hudson Valley Restaurant Week Begins With Delicious Specials

After a false start last spring, the fall edition of Hudson Valley Restaurant Week is taking place now through Nov. 22.

It is being touted as "the sequel," which is an appropriate tag for this popular dining out promotion sponsored in spring and fall by The Valley Table Magazine (now owned by Westchester Magazine). Part two includes scores of past participants and some new ones from throughout the Hudson Valley even stretching the borders into Fairfield County, Conn., Scarsdale, White Plains, Mamaroneck and New Rochelle as patrons are anxious to cash in on the seasonal bounty at reasonable prices.

Prices have risen a bit this time around. Restaurants are expected to offer three-course luncheons for \$25.95, and three-course dinners for \$35.95. There are also take-out options. Please remember that beverages, tax and tip are not included in the bill. Sometimes there are caveats, so be sure to verify the hours and the menus that are being served. Reservations are advised.

For additional information and an up-to-date list of participating restaurants, visit [www.valleytable.com/hvrw](http://www.valleytable.com/hvrw).

## Tasty Spanish Tapas at La Camelia

Prior to the start of the pandemic, which seems so long ago, I had met a friend for lunch in the pub room at La Camelia in Mount Kisco, one of the few restaurants in the area to serve cuisine from Spain and Portugal.



By Morris Gut

I had not been there for quite some time, not since founder Antonio Alvarez sold it to Victor and Serafina Varela several years ago. It sits on a quiet hilltop, and I recall the surrounding gardens always added great charm to the setting.

The tapas selection at La Camelia is the default lunch menu, unless you want to order from the dinner menu, which offers many choices. My guest, who was of Spanish background,

led the way by ordering Amejas Rellenas (baked little neck clams); Empanadillas Gallegas (veal meat turnovers with mixed greens); and a dramatic plate of Camarao de Mocambique (giant grilled tiger prawns). Each plate was well-flavored and served with an appropriate dipping sauce.

We found ourselves double-dipping into the leftover little neck clam sauce. There was good crunchy bread on the side. A fine Rioja red wine was a perfect complement to our light meal. Thanks to the house for recommending the bottle. It was nice to be back.

La Camelia is located at 234 N. Bedford Rd. in Mount Kisco. Open daily 12 to 9:30 p.m. Take-out and delivery. Free parking. Info: 914-666-2466 or visit [www.lacameliarestaurant.net](http://www.lacameliarestaurant.net).

## Casual and Fancy at Pizza Cucina

Proprietor Charlie Gambino and his crew are producing some tasty pizzas at Pizza Cucina. And now, fine dining specials have



Pizza Cucina's osso buco.

made their way to the menu, too, recalling many of the signature dishes from the former Ernesto's that had operated down the street for many years.

Patrons can sit down to a hot sandwich, steam table meal or house-made pappardelle pasta with a lovely lamb ragu. Either way, you will be served professionally. In keeping with COVID-19 protocols, the house recently installed air filtration systems.

Pizza Cucina is a playful redesigned space with a jazzy red logo offering fresh Neapolitan pizza varieties, focaccia, garlic rolls, calzones, finger foods, soups, entrée size salads and

overstuffed paninis and wedges. Juicy eight-ounce specialty beef and turkey burgers are available. You can also order pasta, entrees and desserts, all from the open kitchen.

There is a multiflavored antipasti platter, sturdy and delicious house-made lasagna, osso buco the size of Mount Vesuvius, a hearty veal chop, parmigiana Risotto con Verdure and Gamberi, and the list goes on.

Pizza runs the gamut from the classic Margherita to Nonna's, a square thin crust pizza with house-made tomato sauce, fresh mozzarella, sliced tomatoes and basil. The Formaggi White

*continued on next page*

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# Fall Hudson Valley Restaurant Week Begins With Delicious Specials

continued from previous page

Pizza includes mozzarella, parmigiana and ricotta, while the decadent chicken bacon ranch is topped with chicken cutlet, crispy bacon and ranch dressing.

Meat lovers will enjoy the meatball, sausage, bacon and pepperoni pizza, while the whole wheat primavera includes grilled eggplant, zucchini and peppers over pesto. Or you can create your own.

Pizza Cucina is located at 102 W. Post Rd. in White Plains, across from the Boulevard White Plains development. The restaurant is open Sunday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Small bar and beverages. Take-out, delivery and catering. Major credit cards accepted. Casual dress. Handicapped accessible. Free and municipal parking. Info: 914-752-4611 or visit [www.pizzacucinawp.com](http://www.pizzacucinawp.com).

## Dining With UV Lighting at La Piccola Casa

With cooler weather coming our way, more diners will be moving indoors and restaurants are doing their best to adhere to the COVID-19 protocols. Pulling up to La Piccola Casa on Boston Post Road in Mamaroneck, the first thing you notice are the new signs placed on the historic James Fenimore Cooper House: "Now Featuring HEPA Air Filtration and UV Lighting For Your Indoor Dining Safety." A sign of the new normal in the restaurant business.

Went inside for a glass of wine and an order of their delicious clams oreganata. Walter



The giant tiger prawns at La Camelia in Mount Kisco, which offers cuisine from Spain and Portugal.

Ricci, the amiable chef and proprietor, proudly pointed out his protocols and showed me the UV lighting boxes hanging in the front and rear dining rooms. When in operation, the lights emitted are invisible to the naked eye but dilute the virus from the air. I had never seen them in use at a restaurant.

By the way, Ricci was freshening up the premises with a new coat of paint. He is currently offering a fall-winter promotion: buy one entrée, get the second entrée at half-price Monday through Wednesday for lunch and dinner.

Sounds good to me. Ricci's Italian-American cooking is quite good. I enjoy sitting in the bar room with its view of Harbor Island Park across Route 1.

La Piccola Casa is located at 410 W. Boston Post Rd. in Mamaroneck. Open seven days for lunch and dinner. Take-out and delivery. Free parking. Info: 914-777-3766 or visit [www.lapiccolacasarestaurant.com](http://www.lapiccolacasarestaurant.com).

*Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at 914-235-6591 or [gutreaactions@optonline.net](mailto:gutreaactions@optonline.net).*



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Indian Point Energy Center







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